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Items of Interest:

Traveling This Memorial Day weekend, Spring or Summer? Each year millions of Americans travel across the U.S. and abroad for vacation, business, or to visit friends and family. Unfortunately, about half of these travelers get sick or injured during their trip. The good news is that most travel-related sickness and injury can be prevented. You are likely to be a traveler who has an enjoyable trip free from illness or injury when you follow these tips: be informed, be ready and be smart when you travel. Be informed: Learn about travel health risks and what to do to avoid them before your trip. Be ready: Get any vaccinations (shots) or medicines that you will need before your trip. Be smart while you travel: Make sure you follow travel safety tips while you are on your trip. For more information on how you can make traveling a fun and safe adventure, visit www.cdc.gov/travel/other/traveltips.htm

Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

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Naval Hospital Rota Medical Officer Earns Bronze Star

By Photographer's Mate 2nd Class (AW) Glen Dennis, Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

ROTA, Spain - Cmdr. Bryan P. Schumacher, family physicians staff at U.S. Naval Hospital Rota, Spain, was presented with the Bronze Star April 20 for his service in Iraq during a six-month deployment, October 2004 through March 2005.

Schumacher earned the Bronze Star for his role in the battle of Fal-lujah in November 2004 and his role during the first Iraqi elections in January 2005.

"Cmdr. Schumacher is one of the truly hard-working physicians and is a great addition to the Rota team," said Capt. Jonathan Cutting, commanding officer of U.S. Naval Hospital Rota, Spain. "We are very

proud of his accomplishment under very difficult conditions in the Iraqi war zone. The recognition is truly deserved."

The certificate that accompanied the award notes how Schumacher championed the augmentation of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment Aid Station with a Shock Trauma Platoon, which provided critical advanced trauma stabilization for nearly 100 combat casualties.

"He obtained invaluable armored ambulances for division units within the city," the award certificate explains. "On multiple occasions, he responded heroically to treat wounded Marines injured by

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SOUTH CHINA SEA - Hospital Corpsman Steffon Corna sets up dental tools for a tooth extraction in the Dental Department aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). Lincoln and embarked Carrier Air Wing Two (CVW-2) are currently underway in the Western Pacific operating area. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Brandon C. Wilson

Comfort Completes International Medical Exercise

By Journalist 3rd Class Heather Weaver, National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

BALITMORE - USNS Comfort returned to her homeport in Baltimore harbor May 14 after completing an extended international medical exercise and routine inspections.

"The purpose of this mission is to better prepare our Sailors and international allies for any event that may constitute the deployment of this ship," said Capt. Albert Shimkus, Medical Treatment Facility commander.

Comfort sailed to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where U.S. Navy and Public Health Service personnel teamed up with Canadian forces, the British Royal navy and a representative

from the Japanese Navy to hold an international medical mass casualty drill. Working side by side, international allies assessed simulated patients, rendered care and practiced saving lives.

"It's important to build bonds between the multinational service," said British Royal Navy Petty Officer Naval Nurse Lisa Harrison. "At the end of the day, we're all trying to accomplish the same goal, which is to provide the best medical care possible in each situation."

"I am pleased with the success of this exercise," Shimkus said. "Our goal was to build a cohesive international crew and we accomplished that. The bonds formed during this exercise will last forever."

"The mission of this platform if



Official U.S. Navy file photo of USNS Comfort.

growing to not only include supporting combat operations, but to support both humanitarian as well as disaster relief operations," he added. "It's vital that we learn to work with all of our partners because it's highly likely they will be embarked with us in the future."

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USNS Mercy Arrives In Manila

By COMPACFLT Public Affairs

MANILA - The U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) arrived in Manila Bay today en route to providing humanitarian and civic assistance in a planned, coordinated effort with the government of the Republic of the Philippines and other nations and NGO relief organizations in the region.

USNS Mercy will visit select locations in the southern Philippines, including the Sulu area. This mission reflects longstanding ties between the United States and the Philippines, as well as our continued commitment to work together to assist people in need of humanitarian outreach.

"The deployment of USNS Mercy to Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific exemplifies the United States commitment to working together with our friends, partners and the regional community," said Adm. Gary Roughead, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "By deploying the Mercy, we are training our medical crew in order to better prepare them to respond in times of disaster relief."

The deployment is expected to last five months, approximately one month of which will be spent in the Philippines. The effort is being carried out in conjunction with Non-Governmental Organizations, and in close coordination and partnership with local medical care professionals. Volunteers from the U.S. Public Health Service, Aloha Medical Mission, Project Hope, and the University of California at San Diego Pre-Dental Society are joining Mercy in Manila, as are a contingent of medical specialists from the U.S. military and Canadian military. Medical personnel of the Armed Forces Philippines will embark the ship for the Philippine portion of the deployment, providing focused medical care in partnership with their Ameri-

can counterparts. Additionally, the crew on board Mercy is partnering with assistance organizations who are working ashore such as the Tzu Chi foundation, ACDI/VOCA, Save the Children and the Philippine Red Cross.

A number of U.S. and Philippine government, military and civilian agencies have been involved in planning the myriad details that go into this month-long mission of medical, dental and civic-action programs to provide focused humanitarian assistance to the people of the Philippines.

For this deployment, Mercy has been configured with special medical equipment and a robust multi-specialized medical team of uniformed and civilian health care providers to provide a range of services ashore as well as on board the ship.

The San Diego-homeported ship can support various services such as casualty reception, optometry screenings, eyewear distribution, physical therapy, burn care, radiological and laboratory services, dermatology, urology, obstetrics and gynecology, general surgery, ophthalmologic surgery, plastic surgery, basic medical evaluation and treatment, preventative medicine treatment, dental screenings and treatment, immunizations, public health training and assessment, vector control and veterinary services.

In addition, the 894-foot-long ship will deploy with small team of Sailors from the Naval Construction Force (Seabees) to perform repair and minor construction projects ashore. Some of these construction projects can directly improve medical and sanitary situations. The U.S. Navy Show Band is also deployed aboard the ship and will be performing in select locations throughout Manila and the southern Philippines.

NH Pensacola Selects Top Nurses During Corps Celebration

By Journalist 1st Class (AW) Russ Tafuri and Rod Duren,
Naval Hospital Pensacola Public Affairs

PENSACOLA, Fla. - The day before the Navy Nurse Corps' 98th anniversary, Naval Hospital (NH) Pensacola, Fla., honored its top military nurses of the year from across the four-state command, May 12.

NH Pensacola's nurses took three of the four top awards. Lt. Matthew Graser was selected Senior Nurse of the Year (NoY), and Lt. Cmdr. Donald Sylvester and Lt. j.g. Kristie Brannam were both named Non-Ambulatory NoY.

Lt. Cmdr. Cindy Baggott, manager of the Naval Air Station/Joint Reserve Base at Belle Chasse, La., branch health clinic, and senior nurse of Naval Ambulatory Care Clinic (NACC) New Orleans, was selected as Ambulatory Nurse of the Year.

Graser multitasks as the perioperative clinical coordinator and staff nurse manager of the main operating room, central sterile supply, post-anesthesia care unit and the endoscopy suite while maintaining "unmatched patient care" for a department that performs more than 2,700 surgical cases per year, said Lt. Cmdr. Cheryl Costa of Perioperative Nursing Services.

"The Navy takes the nursing professional to a place where the opportunities are endless and boundaries are non-existent," said Graser, and provides the environment for young nurses to flourish ... and instills and cultivates the core values of honor, courage and commitment" into the practice of nursing.

The senior co-winner of the Non-Ambulatory NoY award, Sylvester, serves as division officer for the medical-surgical ward and ambulatory procedures unit.

As the command's primary peripherally inserted central catheter nurse, Sylvester conducted procedures

that saved nearly \$50,000; and was instrumental in the procurement of a telemetry monitoring system which substantially increased the command's ability to safely monitor patients.

He was instrumental in the medical evacuation of a ventilator-dependent patient to NH Jacksonville as Hurricane Dennis approached the Gulf Coast last August and had a repeat performance for Hurricane Katrina.

Brannam manages the complexities of a 34-bed medical-surgical unit while supervising 11 military and civilian staff members. She was instrumental in the transition of telemetry monitoring from the ICU to the ward using her knowledge of cardiac dysrhythmia to teach telemetry training, ensuring policies reflect current practice guidelines.

The four-year Navy nurse consistently receives compliments from patients – particularly from veterans and military retirees – on her bedside manner and astute delivery of nursing care. A strong patient advocate, Brannam is keen to the needs of patients as well as subtle changes in their condition.

Baggott's multiple operational deployments and clinical backgrounds have provided the "building blocks" for her role in the New Orleans clinics, which support a number of commands, including aviation assets, she said.

Among her operational deployments, the "most rewarding tour was as critical care nurse, Fleet Surgical Team 5," Baggott said. She joined the 17-member team in June 2000 after completing Duty Under Instruction at the University of Maryland-Baltimore. During the two-and-a-half year tour, the team was assigned to three different ships: USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6), USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3) and USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63). NH Pensacola nurses and staff also held a cake-cutting ceremony in honor of the Corps 98th birthday.

Rota continued...

(Continued from page 1)

improvised explosive devices and mortar attacks. He worked with local Iraqi physicians and Battalion medical personnel to craft the mass casualty contingency plans for the historic Iraqi elections Jan. 31, 2005."

Schumacher was responsible for the medical readiness and medical care of more than 25,000 Marines, Sailors and Soldiers in the 1st Marine Division area of operations, including two Marine Expeditionary Units, two Regimental Combat Teams, an Army Brigade and various independent battalions.

He also assisted with the pilot program Operational Stress Control and Rehabilitation (OSCAR), pro-

vided environmental health and preventive medical care for 31 Division-forward operating bases, and worked closely with all division staff.

"I am very proud to have received this award, but not because of any particular action on my part," Schumacher said. "I'm proud because it represents the efforts of Navy medicine as an integral part of the Marine Corps. I'm proud to have been a part of the efforts of so many dedicated, hardworking deployed military members, each doing their part in difficult, frequently deadly circumstances."

He also credits the team of Fleet Marine Force corpsmen and medical officers he worked with in the Division Surgeon's Office.

"Much of what I am given credit for is due to their hard work and dedication," he said.

For Schumacher, the award is notable, but his proudest achievement is his service with the Marines.

"Sixteen years ago, the father of a good friend of mine, a corpsman with the Marines in Vietnam, gave me some excellent advice when I entered the Navy," he said. "If you ever get the chance, go with the Fleet Marine Force. As a doc, if you take care of your Marines, they will always take care of you,"

Schumacher said. "I have found this to be very true. I am proud of this award, but I am most proud of having served with the Marines."

Bethesda Helps Teach Future Medical Professionals

By Journalist 3rd Class Matt Bullock,
National Naval Medical Center
Public Affairs

BETHESDA - National Naval Medical Center staff welcomed 16 high school students May 10 to help them gain first-hand experience in the medical field.

Thomas Edison High School of Technology offers its juniors and seniors a medical career course that allows students to explore their options in medicine.

"The program offers student's one-on-one time with experts from a hospital so they can make personal connections with medical experts, ask questions and make more informed decisions about their future," said Kristine Mansky, a registered nurse and medical careers teacher.

Students work with electronic vital signs equipment, training mannequins and computers. The program is designed to education students on medical ethics, professionalism and medical career options.

"The program has opened a lot of doors for me," said Jenny Robles, a medical careers student. "I knew I wanted to work in the medical field before the program, but I wasn't exactly sure what field I wanted to work it. I've learned about jobs that I didn't even know existed and learned medical terms that I know will help me in the future."

"I want to be a pediatric nurse and this program has helped me make better choices," said Brittany Jones, another student. "I thought I wanted to work in a hospital setting, but now that I've had the chance to see what that's like, I would prefer to work in my own office. I probably wouldn't have liked my job as much if I ended up in a hospital."

Mansky said her students are accelerated Maryland students that are co-enrolled at Edison and their home high school. They attend their home school for half a day Monday through Friday and spend the rest of their day learning about what a future in the medical sector can offer them. Students must have a B average in Math, Science and Chemistry classes and have higher than 90 percent attendance.

Students visit over 20 clinics throughout the hospital and learn skills from corpsman and nursing medical staff they can use for the rest of their lives. They become certified in First Aid, CPR and earn a Maryland certified nursing assistant certificate.

Mansky said the program is a complementary collaboration between Thomas Edison and Bethesda.

"Nurses love the students who soak up information, ask questions and constantly wanting to know more," said Marguerite Niemoeller, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit's



assistant director. "They are the ones that hopefully will go into medicine. Sometimes it's just an expression on their face, the light bulb has come on, that tells you that they have grasped what you are telling them and are ready to learn more."

"It makes me feel good about my job when I can teach someone else what I learned in corps school," said Hospital Corpsman Kyle Hewitt, in Bethesda's Pediatric Clinic. "I can tell the students are interested in what I'm teaching them and it kind of boosts my morale."

Mansky said each of her classes has ended with at least one student joining the military. In fact, she said one of her former students currently works at the National Naval Medical Center as a corpsman.

Comfort continued...

(Continued from page 2)

After departing Halifax, Comfort made a short port stop in Boston then sailed to Norfolk, Va., where she underwent mandated substance material and readiness testing.

"The testing provides verification that equipment is working properly under actual operating parameters, such as full electrical load and design pressures with the ship working in a seaway," said Richard Cicchetti, the ship's master. "These are conditions that a pier side dock trial cannot fully replicate. Addition-

ally, many components of the ship are being tested under worst case scenario parameters, such as generator feed back, emergency startup from dead ship conditions, as well as equipment shutdowns."

David Lieberman, the ship's second mate, said extra work was put in to prepare for the testing, but the ship is always ready to deploy in a moment's notice.

"The engineers and the rest of the crew are always working hard to keep the ship operational," Lieberman said. "This national asset will be fully prepared for any mis-

sion it's called upon to serve."

In previous missions, Comfort assisted in relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The ship also offered relief for Operation Iraqi Freedom as well as provided services for rescue workers after the Sept. 11, terrorist attacks.

Comfort has unique capabilities for humanitarian relief missions including helicopter lift, advanced medical equipment, a wide range of medical skills, berthing and personnel support, as well as supplies to support medical operations ashore.

BUMED Hosts Ceremony Honoring the 98th Birthday of Navy Nurse Corps

By Christine A. Mahoney, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

WASHINGTON - The Navy Nurse Corps celebrated 98 years of service May 12 with a cake-cutting ceremony at Navy Medicine Headquarters, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. The official Nurse Corps birthday is May 13, 1908.

With a force of 5,000 active-duty and Reservist nurses, the Nurse Corps is prepared to employ their medical skills in support of their fellow Marines and Sailors stateside and abroad.

"This is what has held our nurses together for the past 98 years, the nurse's ability to adapt to the environment in which they are placed because of their strength, their commitment and their compassion," said Rear Adm. Christine Bruzek-Kohler, director, Navy Nurse Corps. "Navy Nurses are one member of a very large and important healthcare team. The value that we provide is unique to our profession, but it is not in and of itself the only thing that takes

care of patients. Navy Nurses are partners on the greatest healthcare team in the world."

Navy Medicine's operational, conventional and humanitarian missions benefit from the Nurse Corps' combination of educational and training programs, and the exchange of their medical expertise across the federal, state, local and international arenas. To meet the challenges of today's world, the role of Navy Nurses continue to evolve into a greater perspective which crosses the joint service and inter-agency world at all levels.

Nurse Intern Class members from the National Naval Medical Center read Nurse Corps birthday letters from Navy Surgeon General, Vice Adm. Donald Arthur; Rear Adm. Adam Robinson, chief, Navy Medical Corps; Rear Adm. Brian Brannman, director, Medical Service Corps; Rear Adm. Christine Bruzek-Kohler, director, Navy Nurse Corps; and FORCM Robert Elliott (FMF/SS/SW), Navy Medicine force master chief.

At the end of the ceremony,



WASHINGTON - Rear Adm. Christine Bruzek-Kohler, director, Navy Nurse Corps; and Ensign Jannie Brice, the youngest member of the Nurse Corps, cut the first piece of birthday cake. U.S. Navy photo by Christine A. Mahoney

Bruzek-Kohler and Ensign Jannie Brice, the youngest member of the Nurse Corps, cut the first piece of birthday cake. Nurse Corps members and guests were invited to enjoy the cake and refreshments, and congratulate Nurse Corps members on their 98th birthday.

Eleven Corpsmen Join Hygienist 'Fraternity'

By Rod Duren, Naval Hospital Pensacola Public Affairs

PENSACOLA, Fla. - Eleven hospital corpsmen assigned to Naval Hospital (NH) Pensacola graduated

from a national dental hygienist program May 5 at Pensacola Junior College (PJC), and received their hygienist pins, signifying their operational readiness.

The Pensacola school is one of two schools in the country with which the Navy has contracted through the Selective Training And Readiness (STAR) program to send personnel to support the Navy and Marine Corps worldwide.

"It was a grueling two years," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jared Anderson of Flower Mound, Texas, "but I wouldn't have traded the experiences for anything." Anderson served as president of the graduating class.

The Navy Dental Hygienist graduation and pinning culminates

an intense two-year Duty Under Instruction program where former dental technicians -- now hospital corpsmen -- are "accepted into the national Dental Hygienist fraternity and will shortly go operational for tours overseas and shipboard," said Capt. Roger Houk, director of dental services at NH Pensacola.

"Each year, a group comes into the program and a group graduates," explained Chief Hospital Corpsman Anthony Lark, the area's new military liaison on enlisted dental programs. Lark is assigned to the hospital's branch health clinic at Naval Aviation Technical Training Command in Pensacola.

"Next year, we have 15 in the pipeline to graduate," Lark said.



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